

Iowa 2005 Legislative Initiatives and Sample Language

Electronic Transmission of Election Materials

Since the 1990 general election electronic transmission has proven to be a valuable alternative method for facilitating the enfranchisement of military persons and overseas citizens serving their country who may have otherwise been unable to vote. This initiative has helped ensure these citizens were not disenfranchised by allowing them to cast a ballot when they would not otherwise have been able to vote due to time and location constraints.

Throughout an election year cycle, various circumstances exist that require the need for this alternative procedure in order for citizens to vote. The basic concept of electronic transmission of election materials is to secure high-speed delivery of election materials to and from the voter and local election officials. Your support in developing the **acceptance of electronic transmission for all aspects of the process**, with proper controls, would cut the ballot transit time at least in half. This would reduce the major obstacle to voting absentee and allow local election officials more administrative flexibility in preparing election materials.

Consideration should be given to expand the use of modern technology in the absentee voting process. We realize Iowa enacted legislation to provide for electronic transmission of the Federal Post Card Application request for registration and an absentee ballot. We encourage expanded use of this alternative to include electronically sending the ballot to the voter and accepting the voted ballot from the voter where circumstances would otherwise disenfranchise a citizen. The following sample language would allow for these procedures.

Sample Language

An applicant who is a member of the United States Uniformed Services or the United States merchant marine, a family member, or is a qualified elector living outside the United States, may apply for registration and an absentee ballot by electronic transmission if otherwise qualified to apply for and vote by absentee ballot. An auditor or clerk may send and receive absentee ballot applications and accept voted ballots from eligible electors via electronic transmission.

Late Registration Procedures

We understand Iowa currently allows discharged military personnel to register late. **We encourage expanding this option to their family members and overseas citizens who may go through a transition period when they first leave the Uniformed Services or**

overseas employment and may reside in your state just prior to an election. Often, the date of discharge or termination of overseas employment and a state's registration requirement combine to disenfranchise a citizen returning home after active duty or employment abroad. Special procedures to allow these persons to register and vote would solve this problem. Twenty-six states currently allow such procedures.

Sample Language

An individual, or accompanying family member who has been discharged or separated from the Uniformed Services, the merchant marine, or from employment outside the territorial limits of the United States, too late to enable him or her to register by the regular state deadline for registration, shall be entitled to register for the purpose of voting at the next ensuing election after such discharge, separation, or termination of employment.